

Dunedin a group of librarians, Public and University, devoting their full time to professional problems. An initial impetus was given by the generous Carnegie grants which gave overseas training and experience to A. G. W. Dunningham, Dorothy Neal White, and myself. Libraries were immensely strengthened by the increased grants which began to be made, particularly after 1935, both by our local authorities and by the New Zealand Government. The Society of Otago Librarians, which was started in 1936 and later became the Otago Branch of the N.Z.L.A., was able to draw on the ability of such members as E. H. McCormick (then Hocken Librarian), Dorothy Neal White, Ngarita Gordon, Mary Fleming, and A. G. W. Dunningham. It is largely as a result of the enthusiasm it engendered that recent years have seen so many achievements.

A century has passed since Thomas Burns arranged Otago's first library in the tiny wooden building at the harbour's edge in new born Dunedin. The province now has over half a million books in its libraries, with many rich collections in special fields. For all that has been done in those hundred years, and because so much of it has been collecting rather than organizing, the Otago librarians of today are still able to experience the pioneering thrills of opening new territories in bibliography and library service.

OTAGO'S LEGACY OF PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Basil Dowling

PUBLIC LIBRARIES, HOWEVER LARGE AND EFFICIENT, can never wholly supersede the private collection of books and other printed material by people of good taste and scholarly enthusiasm. Such private collections, indeed, have been the rich nucleus of many of the world's most famous libraries: the Bodleian in Oxford, the Pepysian in Cambridge, the British Museum Library, the Huntington in California, the Mitchell in Sydney, the Turnbull in Wellington. There

are signs, though, of the gradual disappearance of the large private library from the modern world, where people buy fewer books and with less discrimination than in the days before the advent of free libraries, book clubs, cheap popular editions, the cinema, and radio. If this is really so and the tendency increases, it will have not a good but a bad ultimate effect on libraries and the reading public. The great French writer Georges Duhamel asserts (in his book *In Defence of Letters*) that reading itself is in danger, and gives good reasons for his assertion. At any rate, it can be agreed that the continued existence of the private library is threatened, with "the passing of the age when life was on the whole more leisurely and isolated than now, and a good store of books a necessity to the educated man.

HOCKEN LIBRARY

Luckily, Otago had many such men among its first settlers and has inherited some of their libraries. Most important of these is the library of Dr T. M. Hocken whose indefatigable search all over the world for any printed material bearing on the early days of the New Zealand and other South Seas settlements has its monument in the now famous Hocken Library in Dunedin. The large collection of his letters lately put in order and calendared by the University Library staff as part of a centennial project illustrates the patient zeal with which he pursued his objective in spite of many difficulties and rebuffs. The beginnings of the library as we know it go back to 1906 when Hocken offered to present to the city of Dunedin, as representing the Dominion, his collection of manuscripts, books, pamphlets, pictures, maps, and documents relating to the history and ethnology of Australia and Oceania, and especially New Zealand. One of the conditions of the offer was that the city should provide a suitable building to house the collection, and the editor of the *Otago Daily Times* opened a fund for the purpose. The sum of £5,573 was ultimately obtained from various sources, and after some controversy about the most suitable site for the new building, it was decided that a Hocken Wing should be erected at the north end of the Museum building. The original design of the architect, Mr Ross, provided for three storeys and a basement, but this was beyond the limits of the available funds, and the present Hocken Wing consists

of two storeys and a basement. It was begun in March, 1908, and formally declared open to the public in March, 1910, by His Excellency the Governor, Baron Plunket. Whatever may be the future permanent home of the Hocken collection (it may be destined to form part of a new University Library), few of those who have seen and used the present library will doubt the wisdom of having housed it where it is for the first stage of its history. The library itself, on the top floor of the wing, is a quiet, dignified, and serviceable room which seems to retain something of the personality of its founder. The books are arranged behind glass doors in wall cases and projecting stacks, and there are cabinets for the newspaper files, pictures, photographs, and maps here and in the adjoining picture gallery. A glance round the shelves and through the cabinets reveals the richness and variety of the collection. Here, among the books, is the splendid and unique section of Maori bibliography, to which Hocken gave half a lifetime of patient labour and research; the very first books and pamphlets produced in Otago and other settlements; an outstanding section on the early voyages of discovery, to which much has been added in recent years; and a multifarious mass of printed material of historic, literary, and typographical interest from guide-books, directories, and almanacs, to biography, fiction, and verse. The accumulation of newspapers is considered the finest in New Zealand for the earliest period. All the principal New Zealand papers of that time are represented, including a number of Maori papers from 1842 on; also a set of early Tasmanian papers which Hocken got from sailors and traders.

Among the very valuable collections of manuscripts are, of course, the original journals and letters of Samuel Marsden, the editing of which by Dr J. R. Elder was the first important publication to issue from the library. Other rich and still largely unexploited sources of history are the manuscripts of the missionaries Kendall, Hall, King, Kemp, George Clark, Colenso, and others; the journal of Sir William Fox; and much more material of significance among the documents and papers of governors and public servants during the settlement of the provinces. There are, for example, the Burns and Maning letters, and the papers of Cargill, Selfe, and Shortland. And of perhaps equal impor-

tance to the future historian is the mass of newspaper clippings, cartoons, posters, entertainment programmes, and all those ephemeral minutiae which help so much to recover the vivid realities of life in an old community.

The pictures and map section, too, is noteworthy and irreplaceable, containing as it does representative work by many of the best painters, cartoonists, draughtsmen, and cartographers of the Dominion's first half-century—the delicate water-colours, for instance, of George O'Brien, David Hutton, Buchanan, and Hodgkins; James Brown's trenchant set of cartoons, and the admirable work of men like Meryon, Webber, Gilfillan, and Le Breton. Many of these pictures have not only historic interest but genuine artistic merit, and displays in the Hocken gallery have done much in recent years to gain them the appreciation they deserve.

The scope of the Hocken collection has been defined since 1919 (though not rigidly) to include all works bearing on the history and ethnology of New Zealand and the South Seas before 1901, and the Library Committee (responsible to the University Council) is doing its best not only to fulfil the wishes of its founder but also to co-operate effectively with the acquisition policies of other libraries. Much remains to be done in filling the gaps in the collection and, still more, in making it more readily accessible by means of better classifying and cataloguing, fuller indexing, and other modern library techniques. No one is more aware of this than the University Librarian, Mr John Harris, who has served the Hocken Library with characteristic energy and sound judgment. Progress has been much hindered by inadequacies of income and particularly of staff, but the library's history and present value should be a cause of pride to Otago in its centennial year and to New Zealand as a whole.

MENAB COLLECTION

Second in importance among Dunedin's inherited book treasures is the Menab Collection which is kept in a special room of the Public Library. Menab, like Hocken, started his collection while writing on early New Zealand history, and gathered his material with the same thoroughness though with a somewhat different aim, including in his collection books about New Zealand, books written by New Zealanders, and books written in New Zealand. In December, 1913, Dr

McNab presented his collection to the citizens of Dunedin, one of the conditions being that the City Council should add to it from time to time. This it has steadily done, adding not only individual works, but a whole new class—books published in New Zealand. The collection is particularly strong in accounts of the early voyages and of the whaling days in New Zealand; also in its newspaper section, which includes nearly all Dunedin's newspapers since 1854, as well as several English and Scottish journals containing articles about New Zealand. The policy of the Library is to concentrate on works published since 1900, thus avoiding, as far as possible, duplication of the Hocken collection. One praiseworthy new enterprise has been the accumulation and binding, in thirteen volumes, of New Zealand obituaries, clipped from two local newspapers—sometimes the only available source, in a young country, of biographical data.

PUBLIC LIBRARY'S OTHER COLLECTIONS

I must not pass from the Public Library without mentioning three other special collections of narrower range bequeathed by Dunedin citizens. One is the Colquhoun Shakespeare collection, presented in 1934 and numbering roughly a hundred volumes of standard texts, lexicons, commentaries, and recognized works of Shakespearean criticism. Of much greater importance is the Walt Whitman Collection, presented by Mrs J. W. Stewart, daughter of the collector, the late W. H. Trimble, first librarian of the Hocken Library, and an ardent admirer of 'the great grey poet'. This collection, begun modestly in 1898, grew to an astonishing completeness and is now said to be the largest Whitman collection outside of U.S.A. It contains all the best editions of the poet's original works, including a rare and valuable first edition of *Drum Taps* published in New York in 1865 and R. L. Stevenson's copy of *Leaves of Grass*; also many biographical and critical books, pictures, magazine articles, and miscellaneous notes of all kinds, similar to the valuable marginal notes of Dr Hocken—everything about Whitman, indeed, that Trimble could lay hands on. Nor is the collection static—the library still buys any new Whitman literature worth having, and little of importance is likely to be missed. A third special endowed collection, just handed over to the library, is that of Alfred and Isabel Reed.

This contains some really remarkable items: an extra-illustrated copy of Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* in ten volumes, with sixty autograph letters (one of them endorsed in the handwriting of Johnson himself and Mrs Thrale); a small collection of books of unusual interest, including a *Breeches Bible*, a 5th edition of Boswell's *Johnson*, a 6th edition of Johnson's dictionary, a book with fore-edge painting, and two early printed books of 1527 and 1537; and about fifty books relating to Dickens, with a complete set of the *Dickensian* from 1905 to 1947.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

The University Library, too, has been enriched by a large number and variety of gifts from private collections. Notable among these is the bequest from the library of John McGlashan (1802–64), which is worth exploring for its own sake and because it is so typical of the private libraries commonly found in Otago during the early period. Though professionally most concerned with law and education, McGlashan is revealed in his library as a lover of imaginative English literature with a preference for the 18th century. I have noted, among many fine sets and single volumes, most of them handsomely bound in full calf, one or two items of uncommon piquancy. There is Hannah Mores *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799); the *Travels* of Thomas Holcroft, friend of Godwin, Hazlitt, and Lamb; Morison's edition (1791–92) of *Goldsmith's Miscellaneous Works* in several volumes, admirably printed and bound; and *Extracts Elegant, Instructive and Entertaining in Prose, Poetry and Epistles* (1791)—three worthy tomes in full tree calf, each a quaint, old-fashioned anthology crammed, through four hundred pages of small, double-column type, with 'improvement' for the young reader. There are also fine old editions of Pope (1767), Edward Young (1755), Sterne (1782), the *Spectator*, Chesterfield's *Letters*, Hume, Smollet, Crabbe, Cowper, Milton, Dryden, Bell's *British Theatre* (twenty-one volumes, 1776–80), and other mellow 18th century works.

Further private bequests to the Otago University Library have been the remarkable collection of the Fels family, among which I must single out the general literature section in English, French, and German, and the splendid fine arts

group, especially good on ceramics. The Fels gift includes also many works on numismatics which, when added to those given by Archdeacon Gavin, make up what must be an intensive subject collection unique in New Zealand if not in the Southern Hemisphere. There is, too, a number of ancient books and manuscripts which will be touched on by Mr D. H. Borchardt.

Other gifts which cannot be overlooked are the Monro collection in the Medical School Library—a treasure of ancient anatomical treatises and medical works; and the library in Knox College, bequeathed and endowed by James Paterson (1807–86), which is particularly rich in philosophy, English biography, and belles-lettres. The late J. T. Holloway, an eminent botanist, left his magnificent collection of botanical works to the University, and is an example of the many professors and lecturers who on their retirement handed over their rich collections to the library.

All these, with the collections of outstanding public men like Dr D. M. Stuart and J. G. S. Grant, which have either been given to the University Library or dispersed through public auction, lend emphasis to the point made already in this article—that the private collection, either general or specialized, has been in fact the foundation of the best libraries. Otago has a rich legacy of such collections, perhaps richer than any other province. And scholarly research in New Zealand libraries would in future profit much by the inheritance of purposeful private collections, however narrow, like those of Trimble, Holloway, and others I have mentioned. There is in Wellington, for example, someone who has acquired a remarkably fine collection of Emily Dickinson, and someone else, in Christchurch, who is said to have almost everything of Robert Bridges. These and others like them (may) be small beginnings, but who knows what they may have grown to, or what libraries may be grateful for them, when another century has passed?